

Neal Waldrop

From: Neal Waldrop [nealwaldrop@earthlink.net]
Sent: Friday, December 21, 2018 8:15 PM
To: Neal Waldrop - gmail (nealwaldrop606@gmail.com)
Subject: Global Endeavor / Revelation Revealed / webinar on December 15
Attachments: 2016-07-17_RR-T08_P088-146_Q059-077.pdf; 2018-12-16_Statements about salvation-survival.pdf

Dear fellow readers of *The Urantia Book* and friends of the Global Endeavor,

On Saturday, December 15, we conducted our fourth webinar based on topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed*, a topic that is entitled, "Comparing and contrasting the true teachings of Jesus with the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity." This was the final webinar in the current series; we plan to resume in January, but have not yet selected a specific date.

Controversy over the statements about salvation (survival into the afterlife)

As I previously informed you, during our webinar on December 8 we began considering and evaluating ten statements about salvation (survival into the afterlife). Statements along these general lines have often been associated with traditional Christianity, although no single denomination proclaims or promotes all ten of them. Therefore it is best to understand them as examples.

As a practical matter, the time available on December 8 permitted participants to exchange detailed comments on the first three, but we did not reach statements 4 through 10. Therefore we proceeded to discuss and appraise them during our webinar on December 15.

I introduced the discussion by summarizing the ratings I had received by E-mail from one of the panelists who had participated on December 8, but who knew that he would not be available on December 15. Soon after we began our discussion of statements 4 through 10, one of the panelists expressed fundamental objections to the overall approach.

After the discussion on December 8, he said, he had had the opportunity to reflect on these matters and had decided that he was no longer willing to participate in the group effort to evaluate the ten statements. He did not believe it was Jesusonian to do this kind of thing; it also, in his view, went against the teachings of *The Urantia Book* that tell us to appropriate the best of other religions and people's beliefs, and then leave the rest behind. So we should be investigating why *The Urantia Book* says there is enough in Christianity to immortalize it. We should be figuring out what they meant by that and highlighting what is best about Christianity, not making ourselves feel superior by highlighting what is worst about Christianity. Therefore, as previously stated, he objected to the whole exercise in principle.

I thanked him for expressing these views and said I would interpret them as effectively amounting to a rating of X, "Cannot be evaluated," that would apply to all of the remaining questions. In addition, I stated that even though what he had just said seemed to be an extreme reply, I treasured his right to say this and the pluralism and diversity that we are seeking to epitomize during these broadcasts.

Another participant reacted to this exchange of views by saying that he very deeply appreciated the atmosphere and the culture of the conversation, the context that I had created, and also the breadth of the discussion. In response to the adverse remarks that the other participant had expressed, he commented that there was an interesting question of who was our audience and what was our purpose as we conversed.

He assumed that our audience was entirely a group of *Urantia Book* readers, and no one else; and that our purpose was to elucidate ideas that are already in *The Urantia Book*. He believed that if the audience were different and larger, particularly including persons who do not read *The Urantia Book* and Christians in general, he was not sure that this would be a purposive conversation — because we would then be acting along the lines that the other participant had referred to, essentially negating the value and validity of another religion. Jesus did not engage in that. Instead he looked for truth, expanded upon it, and allowed it to slowly, steadily, naturally crowd out what was in error, rather than directly criticize it. So this, he thought, was an interesting philosophical point about the nature of our conversation and our audience.

In reply, I agreed that our audience was readers of *The Urantia Book* and predominantly committed readers of *The Urantia Book*, not simply casual readers. There is nothing that would impede someone of another faith — Christian, Muslim, Buddhist, whatever — from looking at our programs if he or she wishes to do so. For they were available, and will remain available, on YouTube. I believed, however, that the message we were exploring is of the greatest interest to committed readers of *The Urantia Book*. If they were not our entire audience, they were the overwhelming majority of it.

Now the context of these procedural questions corresponds to the title of the document, *Revelation Revealed*. While I was writing that document, it was my task to try to dig deeply into what the revelators were telling us, to overcome possible misunderstandings, and indeed to seek to reveal aspects of the teachings of *The Urantia Book* that in my judgment had not received enough attention up to now.

So the word *revealed* in the second half of the title has to do with making known, whereas *revelation*, the first word — even though it is a linguistic cognate — has to do with the spiritual purpose that the revelators were undertaking. Now we get to the question in front of us. Topic 8 reads as follows: “Comparing and contrasting the true teachings of Jesus with the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity.” If we are going to compare and contrast, it is necessary to start with the true teachings of Jesus and then go through, as best we can, at least some of the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity.

I said I believed that the ten statements I had compiled do embody the general spirit and overtones of some statements that have been made by various Christian believers throughout the history of Christianity. Therefore I believed that evaluating these statements was part of the overall task of comparing and contrasting the true teachings of Jesus with the traditional tenets and practices of organized, institutional Christianity.

Further, I believed that our purpose was not only to exchange views, but perhaps to provide additional grist for reflection on the part of committed readers of *The Urantia Book* — in the event that one of us, or perhaps several of us, were to say something that these readers found interesting or useful, and preferably both interesting and useful. That, at least, was what I hoped would happen.

Concluding clarification. Topic 8 in *Revelation Revealed* includes references to Christianity that can correctly be considered favorable and positive. For example, a paragraph on page 112 identifies the social ministry and charitable activities whereby the various branches of institutional Christianity have demonstrated a desire to assist human beings in structured and organized ways. The most notable such passage, however, occurs on pages 124 and 125. It mainly consists of three excerpts from *The Urantia Book* that are quite intriguing and that precede formal question 72. That question is long and detailed; the wording thereof describes it as a “challenge of nuance and equilibrium that may even encompass some degree of ambiguity.”

For a table that summarizes the ten statements and the ratings that the participants assigned, see the second attachment.

Formal question 61

Participants then proceeded to grapple with formal question 61 appearing on page 92 of *Revelation Revealed*:

61. When the Divine Counselor declares that [“the inhabitants of Urantia are to find deliverance from these ancient errors”](#) [*a Divine Counselor, 60:6 / 4:5.6*], is he essentially predicting that most human beings will eventually accept the teachings of *The Urantia Book*? Are you willing to predict that any institutional religion whose leaders proclaim Jesus as the Son of God will abandon its core doctrine that he died on the cross to redeem mankind and atone for our sins?

In general, the participants answered yes to the question contained in the first sentence, but pointed out that the adverb “eventually” is indefinite and probably refers to a very long period of time that persons now alive cannot evaluate accurately. In much the same vein, no one was willing to predict that an institutional religion whose leaders proclaim Jesus as the Son of God will abandon its core doctrine that he died on the cross to redeem mankind and atone for our sins. One panelist commented, however, that if institutional religions do not abandon this doctrine, they are likely to find that believers are increasingly abandoning them.

Discrimination against women

The participants read and discussed two quotations from New Testament epistles that Christian tradition ascribes to the Apostle Paul (the quotations that are reproduced on page 93 of *Revelation Revealed*). There seemed to be a widely shared view that the relative disregard for women owed more to the society and sociology that prevailed during the early centuries of Christianity than to any

theological factor that was specifically associated with the Christian faith. Some participants pointed out that other organized, institutional religions have also treated women in ways that are discriminatory and unfair.

One participant, noting that the second excerpt comes from the epistle named “1 Timothy,” called attention to the apparently unanimous view of Bible scholars that this epistle was actually written by a follower of the Apostle Paul who lived in a subsequent generation, not by Paul himself. (This appraisal agrees with wording shown on page 117 of *Revelation Revealed*, and also in Annex 2, in which the text summarizes the conclusions of scholars concerning the New Testament epistles that were traditionally ascribed to Paul.)

The same participant also remarked that it is not entirely clear that the Apostle Paul actually wrote the discriminatory comments about women reproduced in the first quotation on page 93 (i.e., 1 Corinthians, Chapter 14, verses 13-15). Some scholars apparently wonder whether these statements were inserted during editing that may have occurred in subsequent generations.

Promoting celibacy

During the final few moments of the webinar on December 15, a participant read the excerpt in which a Brilliant Evening Star calls attention to and comments on the preference for celibacy that marked the writings of the Apostle Paul, a preference that became a highly influential feature of the Christian tradition (i.e., 977:1 / 89:3.6). Since the time available did not permit us to discuss this passage, participants will do that when our webinars on topic 8 of *Revelation Revealed* resume in January.

PRACTICAL FACTORS

Since the recordings of all our webinars are available on YouTube, you could watch any or all of them whenever you wish. Here is the link that would take you to the specific location on the Internet:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_6QHPLuABZojhdjE8XJRQg

As a workaround that would help you if you do not have this link immediately to hand, you could log onto the main site for YouTube and then search for “Global Endeavor.” The results would include a reference to our programs, although it may not appear at the top of the list.

Regards, Neal Waldrop.

Chairman, the Committee for the Global Endeavor

[December 21, 2018 at 8:15 pm]